



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV)

What is hMPV?

Human metapneumovirus (hMPV) was discovered in 2001, and has been shown to cause respiratory illness in patients of all ages, but mostly in young children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised. HMPV is one of the leading causes of bronchiolitis in infants and also causes pneumonia, asthma problems, croup (a type of cough). Healthy people infected with hMPV usually have mild symptoms, but some people may have complications that require hospital admission.

Some studies suggest that all children are infected at least once by the age of 5. Infections will likely occur throughout the lifetime and is usually mild with little to no symptoms in healthy people.

HMPV is not a reportable disease so the number of cases in Indiana is not known.

What are the symptoms of hMPV?

Healthy people infected with hMPV usually have mild symptoms, but some people may develop more a severe disease condition.

Symptoms of mild disease include:

- Cough
- Runny nose/Stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Fever

Symptoms of severe disease include:

- Pneumonia
- Bronchiolitis
- High fever
- Cough
- Difficult breathing

- Rapid breathing
- Wheezing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptoms of hMPV usually start 3-5 days after being exposed to the disease.

How is hMPV spread?

Spread of disease is likely to occur by direct contact either through sneezing or coughing or by touching surfaces with the virus on them. The disease usually spreads more frequently in late winter and early spring.

Who is at risk for getting hMPV?

Studies have shown that all children are infected at least once by the age of 5. However, recent studies have shown that older persons or persons with a weakened immune system may be at risk.

How do I know if I have hMPV?

See your health care provider. Limited testing is available through lab testing.

How is hMPV treated?

Treatment includes fever reducers, antihistamines, water and oxygen if necessary.

How is hMPV prevented?

Frequent and very good hand washing, especially if you are ill or caring for others who are ill is important. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, and discard used tissues promptly.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to The American Lung Association Web site at: <http://www.lungusa.org/lung-disease/human-metapneumovirus/>

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